



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

June 12, 2001

Contact: Patrick Lacefield 240-777-7939 Jean Arthur 240-777-7934

COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVES *LEGACY OPEN SPACE* MASTER PLAN

The Montgomery County Council today gave tentative approval a comprehensive master plan to preserve open space in the county.

Legacy Open Space is a \$100 million program to protect exceptional open space important to the county's heritage and future. The program not only protects the traditional agricultural land from development but it also will conserve rural open spaces, urban green spaces, properties bordering water supplies, environmentally sensitive properties, and those that are historically significant. Last year the Council approved \$33 million over six years for Legacy Open Space.

"These properties are the best of the best", said Councilmember Derick Berlage. "Our 'grand canyons' which must be protected for future generations of Montgomery County residents."

The properties will be protected through various methods including easements, dedications, and acquisitions by the county.

The master plan categorizes possible Legacy Open Space sites into three classes based on the importance of the property and the extent to which it has been evaluated.

Class I properties have been evaluated, are considered important for preservation and are eligible for reservation. A property can be in reservation for up to three years while the county tries to determine a method to preserve it. Class II properties have been evaluated and are eligible for Legacy Open Space, but they will not be reserved. Class III properties need further evaluation to determine if they are appropriate for Legacy Open Space.

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Last fall, the county made the first step in implementing the Legacy Open Space program when it purchased the Bucklodge property in Boyds, preserving a large forest area. That owner had planned to develop the property into a golf course.

Earlier this year, the county purchased the Sligo Mill property, some of the last remaining undeveloped land in Takoma Park.

The Council will take final action in July.

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